

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, October 16th, 1919.

Editorial

DO you remember how we used to say, "When the war is over, this, that and the other thing will be easily done"? And now we are finding that now the war is finished, we are pressed with entirely new problems of the utmost gravity, that are not easily done. The man who talks about getting back to pre-war conditions has yet to learn the meaning of the war. It was not a war to secure old things. It was to secure the great principles, righteousness and brotherhood. Old things are being scrapped as readily as worn out equipment if they do not express those principles. But to pull down the old buildings and clear the foundations for a building that will be well and truly built throughout is a task which demands the strength of giants and the heart of heroes, and we have already found that, as a whole, our people do not respond to the emergency signal as they did during the war.

In the first place, they are not sure that there is a real emergency. It is simple for anyone to see an emergency in the shape of an enemy with men, money and equipment, and a brain restrained by no sense of honour or chivalry from ruthlessly using them. It was a case of now or never, now or forever.

In the second place, they are tired out. We have been running at high pressure during the last five years. We had the strength of will to face and meet each new situation and appeal, although it meant nerves were tense to the point of breaking. But we did look forward to a relief and rest when the war was over.

The men from overseas endured situations still more exacting and they have come back after months or years of nervous exhaustion which is bound to have its reaction. A new emergency is something like the cut of a whip to a blooded horse.

So to-day we do not want any S.O.S. signals. They have become more or less irritating. We prefer to settle to the steady, hard grind of a long task which demands persistent spirit. We have been annoyed by the flash-in-the-pan methods of profiteers. We do not want any more mushroom growth in commerce or finance. Our screaming advertisements flick us on the raw. Show us a great task, a long task, a task that calls for brain and muscle and brawn, and we will settle to it and thank God for the chance to do it.

Such a task we have before us in the new Victory Loan for November. It concerns not the defeat of the Germans, not the raising of a new army, not the building of new equipment. It is not an appeal to do something for the passing moment. It is the call to do service which concerns the foundation building and restoration of our national life.

Entirely able are we to do this. By six hundred and fifty-five millions of dollars our citizens have increased their cash balances in the banks since five years ago. One billion, seven hundred and forty millions, four hundred thousands of dollars stands to the credit of Canadians.

It takes a man with more than half an eye to see that Canada must stride out and keep step with the financial and commercial development of other nations or we shall get back in the line and stay back. There is no good in our resting even amid the laurels which our brave men have won. Those laurels have made the world realize that "Canada" stands for resourcefulness, alertness, and efficiency. Those very laurels make it impossible for us to wait until our task overtakes us. Five years of slackness will make men wonder even more at the splendid record of our men overseas because it is not backed up by our national life.

BEYOND all telling Canada has cause for THANKSGIVING this year. With all our allies we are thankful for the Victory which crowned the five years' struggle against odds that were heavy at the start. We are thankful for the spirit of our men and those who fought with them. Never can we forget that without the sacrifice of those who counted the cost and paid it, even to life itself, we should to-day be mourning a defeat.

We have a land free from the age-long sores of Europe, where wickedness and vice have weltered in an ooze of man's neglect and selfishness. We have a heritage which should breed a race of men as unsullied as our Western skies, as broad in mind as our prairies and as high in ideals as the Rockies that shoulder their way to snow-clad peaks.

We are thankful for the undaunted spirit of our people which looks the future in the face. It is a future of great promise. God alone knows how great it is.

But we must beware lest we sell our birth-right for a mess of pottage. The man who can see Canada's future only in terms of commerce and finance, has never caught a glimpse of that future. Surely the war has taught us that a nation's greatness is not measured by its acres or money.

The spirit of a people is the element of true greatness. Are your minds set on righteousness, O ye children of men? Without that, all the wealth of our fields and forests, rivers and mines will be but the holdings of slaves.

That brings us to our greatest cause for thankfulness. How seldom we stop to realize that the very foundation and support of all our world is God Himself. We can never give adequate expression to our gratitude for redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ. Unless our national and personal life is built on His Truth there can be no greatness for our nation.

OVERSTATEMENT is a grave weakness in argument because it is a form of inaccuracy with a motive. The journal which printed these words: "The Prohibition movement must be taken seriously, too, because it has money, Puritan money; one always finds money among those who want to prevent others from enjoying themselves. That is the deepest instinct of the Puritan. He fears pleasure, light, gaiety. He is entirely honest, absolutely self-sacrificing, but with himself he will readily sacrifice his neighbour," makes a present of the case to the opponents. To classify as "kill-joys" the people who have such a keen estimate of life that they see other things besides the indulgence of the moment, is frantic. If the trade in alcoholic beverages had been a dispenser of joy, pure and unadulterated, then there might be a shadow of reason for such a statement.

The fault of overstatement is not confined to one side. We have heard and read statements which lost their force by their extremeness. It is no good anyone using hard names about every man who sees no harm in taking a glass, for the names simply do not stick. There is no need of temperance advocates using extreme methods or speeches. They are not after a snap vote.

The way public opinion in Canada has been travelling for the last twenty-five years and more especially the last three is perfectly clear. In Canada at least we see, as DR. WILFRID GRENFELL, of Labrador, said last Sunday at the Convocation Hall, that the liquor traffic is not a philanthropic institution for the purpose of distributing medicine for the "flu", although that is one of its numerous poses. We hope that none of our readers missed the words of SPECTATOR last week and they will surely be read this week.

The Christian Year

Sin, Conscience, Forgiveness

(NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY)

THE forgiveness of sin is the lesson in to-day's Gospel: "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." What is sin? Admittedly it is not easy to define. It is generally explained as a violation of the will of God. But it is more than that; it is in some way, an infringement of the attributes and prerogatives of God as they extend themselves towards mankind; a curtailment of the free action of God's goodness among men. The God who made the universe has a moral will toward mankind as distinct from the rest of creation, and a moral purpose for man to serve. From His works in creation we discern God's power and might, and learn to regard His sovereignty in the moral universe to be as certain and as absolute as in the physical, so that a contravention of His revealed will in things moral or spiritual is fraught with as great danger to the soul as the attempt to defy or ignore physical law would be to the body. There is, however, this difference, that while in the physical the plan of the Almighty is unchanging and relentless—the man is killed as readily as the fly—in the realm of spiritual relationships mercy modifies and tempers the unerring course of retribution. In His dealing with human life, the glory of creation, the Almighty is seen in the form of personality, in whom is unbounded compassion and solicitude. In this aspect God is all goodness, and the direction of His will is identified with all that is good for mankind in his human life and spiritual experience—so that God is "the Good." Sin is, therefore, not only the violation of God's will but of the goodness and love of God, both as self-contained in Him, and as operative in His moral plan and purpose for the salvation of mankind; it is an interference with our own best interest. Sin in the concrete—the individual's sin—can readily be seen to have social bearings of great importance. There is scarcely a sin that can be thought of that does not involve infringement upon the rights of others or interference with their happiness. Even sins of thought are incipient fires which, unless restrained, flame out into social disorders. So it will be seen that the will of God for us extends very deep down, and very far out, in all directions, and in all ways, whereby the well-being, the aims, and the destiny of mankind are affected. Sin touches wherever the will of God is; hence its great complexity and its manifold mystery.

CONSCIENCE.

Conscience is the divine Hamartometer; it is the repository of all our registered sensibilities of right and wrong; it is attuned as an instrument to catch all moral vibrations; it responds with unerring certitude to moral enlightenment. Conscience keeps ever in touch with passing phases of consciousness as an incentive to the will in determining direction of life; and is so constituted as to be subject to pain, which it communicates to the mind upon the violation of its registered standards of right. No wonder Kant could not get beyond the wonder of the moral conscience within, as of the starry firmament without.

FORGIVENESS.

It is the functioning of an enlightened conscience that produces a sense of sin and gives rise to the painful need of forgiveness. Forgive-

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